

REMARKS

Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 22, 24 and 27-29 are pending in the present application. Claims 22, 24, 27, and 29 are the independent claims.

Claims 23 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,008,935 (Fujita et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,446,345 (Bousselet et al.). By the present Amendment, claims 23 and 26 have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places the subject application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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